

# Checklist for Choosing a Weight Loss Program

Thinking about going on a weight loss program? With so many programs out there, it can be a challenge trying to pick the one that's right for you. Not all programs are created equal. Most programs will help you lose weight, but the best ones will help you keep the weight off. While weight loss programs can provide the support you might be looking for, they aren't regulated in Canada. So it's up to you to do some homework.

**Here's what you need to know to help you choose a program that is safe and leads to long-term success.**

## Step 1: Ask questions before you start

The program you choose should encourage you to lose weight the healthy way:

Does the program encourage a gradual weight loss? Hint: Losing 2 pounds (1 kg) or less per week is gradual, healthy weight loss.

Does the program encourage vegetables and fruit, whole grains, low fat dairy, lean meats and meat alternatives and small amounts of healthy fats?

Is the program flexible so that you can eat the foods you like? Can you eat foods from your culture? Does it allow you to eat out?

Does the program encourage you to be active and have a physical activity plan with tips on how to get started?

Does the program support you to keep the weight off in the long-term?

## Step 2: Look for “red flags”

A weight loss program may be unrealistic if it:

Promises you'll lose more than 2 pounds per week. Losing more than this might lead to an overly strict diet, which is hard to follow long-term.

Restricts you to less than 800 calories a day.

Cuts out major food categories (like gluten or carbohydrates) and stops you from enjoying your favourite foods.

Forces you to buy the company's foods or supplements rather than show you how to make better choices from a grocery store.

Seems rigid and does not fit into your lifestyle or state of health.

Any of these red flags could mean that the program doesn't have your best interest in mind, isn't safe and/or won't give you long-term success. Read more about other ["red flags"](#) to watch out for.

### Step 3: Think about your lifestyle

You are more likely to be successful with a weight loss program if it fits into your regular routine.

Does the plan suit your lifestyle and health?

Can you see yourself following the weight loss (menu) plan?

Do you have details about costs, possible risks and the amount of time needed to reach your goals?

Are the lifestyle changes realistic so that you can continue them after the program?

Will you enjoy the change in your lifestyle or just endure it?

### Looking for support?

Need help figuring out what weight loss plan will work best for you, you may want to think about seeing a [consulting dietitian in private practice](#). Your work insurance policy may cover the cost of these services.

You may also be interested in:

[Get the facts on fad diets](#)

[eaTracker](#)

[My Menu Planner](#)